

The

MESSENGER



of OUR LADY OF AFRICA

Volume 10

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 1952

Number 12

## Thoughts . . . For Christmas

SCHOOL IS OVER, and the laughing little girls run off, calling out their good wishes to Sister as they leave: "Happy Feast, Sister, happy feast!"

What feast is it? What anniversary are we about to celebrate? Do they know, these little Moslem girls, hemmed in as they are by the fanaticism of their creed? For them "Sidna Aissa" Jesus is a Prophet. One, less great than Mohammed, nothing more! He is a Stranger to those millions of pagans who know nothing of the Author of Creation, and to all that multitude who, this very night, will not catch the Angels' words . . . A very legion who have never learned that the Word is waiting to be born again in those souls who welcome His coming, those souls who during Advent, have prepared for His Coming now so close at hand. "And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

The mystery of Christmas is the mystery of God coming to us His creatures, that we may go to Him. To the whole world, from pole to pole, the Redeemer would have His message brought. He did not spare Himself in order to bring light to those who were in darkness. He left His throne of glory and the company of Angels to lie in a straw-lined manger, watched over by two animals. He, who inflames the Seraphims, had known what it is to tremble with cold. He who ordains the movements of the stars, became a little dependent Child. "Who would not return the love of Him who has loved us so much?"

Is this not enough to light in our hearts a great desire for Him, a great movement

towards Him? To make us dream of a conquest that will bring the whole world to His feet; that will bring all nations to worship Him; to inspire in us the wish to add even one little note to the great concert of glory . . . For the Child-God is rich and poor at one and the same time. Poor, because so many souls are separated from Him, so many do not know of His existence, and so many have hidden in the depths of their heart a thirst for the God who created them.

With Faith as their inspiration, the Missionaries went forth to become "Searchers for Souls" to give souls to God and God to souls. This is because one day they themselves had found their hearts filled with Him, that they resolved to live only for others.

Sister M. St. Eucher, W. S.

### Our Greetings

*A Blessed Christmas  
and may the Little King  
shower graces of Peace  
on all the Benefactors and Friends  
of the African Missions  
throughout the coming New Year!*

### SURPRISES

A Greek ox grumbled to Aesop one day,  
"There's a dog in my manger, I can't reach  
the hay."

An ox in Bethlehem, old and benign,  
Said, "That's funny! I've just found God  
in mine."

M. M.

## A Crib and a Conversion



**B**AKAMILBUNGO WAS THE WIFE of a Urundi Chief. Her husband, Kanyarubira, was formerly in the civil service and afterwards became chief of Kagogo. Converted soon after their marriage, he hoped that his wife would enter with him into the catechumenate. But on account of the opposition of her pagan parents, she refused to follow him.

Last Christmas, however, she resolved to please her husband and at the same time satisfy her own curiosity by going to Mass. We gave her a place with the Christian women who sat together on one side of the church. But as she was afraid to uncover her face, she saw very little.

Afterwards she came to the convent and begged to be allowed to look more closely at a baby she had seen lying on some straw beside a young mother. I led her to the crib, which was but a poor one, like most cribs in mission land. But before the little statue of the Divine Infant with arms outstretched and that of His Blessed Mother, Bakamilbungo's face shone with delight. Though she made no remark, as she gazed at the Mother and child she appeared strangely moved. Then she said: "He is like Ndirima." (Ndirima was her own infant.)

Next I showed her the statue of the Sacred Heart, and then the Stations of the Cross, briefly telling her the story of the Passion. At each picture she sighed: "Oh! How cruel they are. Who would not love Him!"

When at last she left the mission, she asked if the baby was always in church and whether she might come and see it again. I felt sure

she had already made up her mind to become a Christian. On the feast of the Epiphany she assisted at Mass, and we noticed that her amulets had been laid aside.

The young mother's new-found faith was to be sorely tried. Little Ndirima fell dangerously ill. In deep distress, she brought him to the mission. Seeing that there was little hope of his recovery, we could only tell her to pray earnestly to Almighty God, and to think of the poor Mother whom she had seen in Church, standing with perfect resignation beside her beloved Son when He was dying on the Cross. Bakamilbungo listened, weeping.

She not only bore her cross bravely, but gave excellent example to her friends and followers. When an old Mutusi, member of the leading caste in Urundi, to which Bakamilbungo herself belongs, came and told her that she was bringing her trouble upon herself by neglecting the worship due to the spirits of her ancestors, she calmly sent him about his business.

Then one day, when her husband was away from home, his father came to visit the sick child. As soon as he saw Bakamilbungo he attacked her on the same subject, using in turn ridicule, threats and entreaties, all in vain. In spite of her father-in-law's anger, she steadfastly refused to resort either to amulets or pagan sacrifices.

Her little Ndirima died a few days later; he had been baptized and given the name of Bartholomew. Bakamilbungo then became a catechumen. Now she comes to the mission every Sunday and Thursday with her husband, making the journey on foot to avoid argument with her family . . . she who had always travelled in a hammock like other ladies of her rank!

Dr. Helen Marie, W. S.

### Our Front Cover

*The privilege of being a happy child of God shines through the face of this little one. Your Christmas offering will help to make many more little faces shine in such a way, thus reflecting the love of the Child Jesus.*

## The Prodigal Daughter Returns

SHE HAD BEEN a very patient and good catechumen. Then we saw her no more at instruction. Mukabaseya had disappeared. Father Vandermeersch made inquiries but to no avail. She had gone.

Then one day she came back to the mission.

"Why did you leave," Father Vandermeersch asked her?

"I was married."

"Why did you do that? Of course you can marry, but you should have spoken to me about it first. That is a very important thing in your life. I suppose you married a pagan?"

"Yes, my mother was going to be sent away by my father. She would have had nothing. I married this pagan so that at least she should have a cow."

She went away. Father thought sadly of another lost sheep.

Months passed and finally one day a tall, strapping young man appeared at the mission.

"Hello, how are you? Come in and sit down. What brings you here?"

"Well, I have baptized someone . . ."

"But I don't know you. I have never seen you at instruction. How is it that you, not a Catholic, have baptized someone?"

"I am the husband of Mukabaseya."

"So you are the one, eh! What has become of her."

"That is just the point. I have baptized her."

"What!"

"Yes, and I have come to see if I have done it correctly."

"Let us get to the bottom of this."

"Well she was very sick. She told me that she was a catechumen and that she did not want to die a pagan. She taught me the prayer for baptism. When I knew this, she showed me where to pour the water. And she told me she wanted to be called Mary. I went quickly to get the water. When I came back she was unconscious. I poured it on her forehead saying: 'I baptize thee in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' Then someone called me and I went outside. I remembered suddenly that she wished to be called Mary. I returned quickly and I said, 'Mary.' Was that all right?"

"And how is Mary now?"

"Oh, she is fine. And I want to be baptized also."

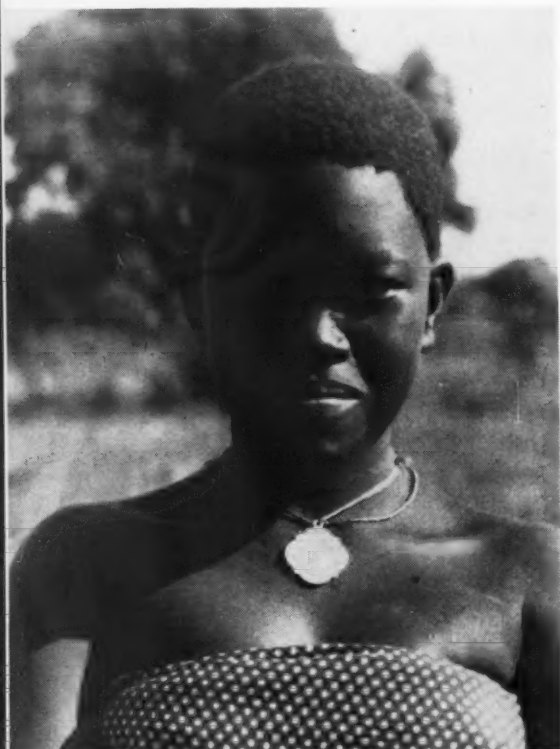
"Is that so? But do you think you can be baptized just like that. You will have to be instructed. You will be a catechumen and that will last a long time."

"But we have been instructed. You can ask us and you will see how well we know our prayers."

"We?"

"Yes, there are about twenty of us up on the hill. Mary instructed us."

Father Vandermeersch went with him and found that it was all true. Twenty pagans knew their prayers perfectly and all had a good elementary idea of the catechism. They had abandoned all pagan practices and they were leading an exemplary life. Thus, far from the missionary, far from the catechist, had grown this little seed, planted in the heart of a catechumen, of a sheep that had been considered lost.



# New Christians From Old Stock

## A Corner of the Congo

The Mission of Mudzi Maria or Bunia is situated on a plain about 3,500 feet above sea level in the Prefecture Apostolic of Lake Albert. The climate is rather pleasant and wholesome. There are two rainy seasons, a short one in March or April and a longer one in September and October. It is during these two seasons that the ground is cultivated; the other months being too dry, are unfavorable for this work.

The crops consist of maize, sweet potatoes, beans, manioc, sorghum, and in some places, bananas. The natives also eat wild plants and gather certain herbs for medicinal purposes, which they use even in the most serious cases.

The Bunia region is inhabited by the Babyra Tribe. The population is about 40,000. Their language, the Kibira, being divided into two distinct classes of words, one applied to animate beings and the other to inanimate objects, presents no serious difficulties.

## Disfiguring for Protection

The women are little better than slaves. They adorn themselves in a barbarous fashion with a disk of smoke-blackened wood set in the upper lip — the latter is cut to hold it. These disks measure from four to five inches in diameter and from three-quarters to one inch in thickness. The custom dates, it is said, from the Arab invasion, when the women took this means of disfiguring themselves so that the enemy would not be tempted by their beauty to carry them off to be wives or slaves. This hideous ornament is sometimes embellished with colored beads, and in time of mourning, the usual disk is replaced by a slice of a banana trunk horizontally cut from the tree. This custom, however, has nearly died out, owing to a law enforced by the Government.

Another peculiar feature of the women's attire is the traditional skirt worn by the little girl as well as by the grandmother. It is made of banana tree fiber which is a sort of string. Lengths of this string are hung on a narrow belt of the same fibre which is passed around the loins. This skirt, in the native woman's opinion, constitutes a dress for all occasions and she further adorns herself by having her face tattooed and her eyelashes plucked.

Bracelets are very popular. They are made of brass or copper wire and from twenty to thirty are worn on each arm and leg. The

## *The Messenger of Our Lady of Africa*

is edited and published bi-monthly with ecclesiastical approbation by the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters), Metuchen, New Jersey. Annual subscription \$1.00. Entered as second class matter December 15, 1931, at the post office of Metuchen, New Jersey, under the Act of March 3, 1879.



children wear strings of small bells around their ankles. Beads are profusely used for ornaments strung into necklaces and bracelets. Large beads, arranged in various colored designs, are used to make belts.

The filing of the teeth into sharp points and the covering of the hair with a red powder, which melts in the sun and forms a kind of varnish, are other distinguishing marks of this tribe.

By nature, the Babyras are reticent, undemonstrative, inconstant and unreliable. They are proud and resent the slightest insult. Possessing moderate intelligence, they are not the most backward among the Negroes.

The natives cultivate small pieces of land which suffice for their needs and they tend their flocks, but above all they are traders. They frequent the markets exchanging baskets, clay jars of different kinds and pitchers from farm produce, maize, sorghum or fish. They also buy these things in one place to sell them in another for profit.

## Daily Chores

Morning finds the Babyra woman spreading corn, sorghum and manioc in the sun which, when dried, she crushes in a wooden mortar with a stick. Then she hurries off to market to bargain these and to gossip with her neighbors. In the evening she goes after her supply of water and wood and in her spare time she makes the "chungu" clay jars of different sizes used as waterpots as well as to cook vegetables and sauce. At meal time, the family squats on the ground around the "chungu" and each in





*After the grinding process the flour is sifted to remove the chaff. It is then ready for the cooking pot, but if it is to be stored for a few days, it is spread in the sun on a mat to remove all traces of moisture, which would cause the flour to mould.*

turn — when not all together — helps himself with the aid of Father Adam's fork. The sauce is served in but one "chungu"; little shells, sticks of wood or even leaves take the place of spoons.

Knives of various sizes, shapes and origin are made from any discarded piece of steel, tin or iron. We learned, at our cost, that a nail may also be fashioned into a knife. A White Sister having driven some nails into the framework of a window needing repairs found that they had disappeared the next day. It was not until we had seen several little boys proudly exhibiting new knives that we discovered the fate of the nails!

At night, the housewife must carefully bank up her fire with ashes; otherwise, she will be obliged to beg some embers from her neighbor next morning. There are no matches; so, year in and year out, the precious flame is kept. A provision of wood is always on hand and from time to time a few small sticks are thrown on the fire. A Negress takes time; she is never in a hurry; and a delay of two, three, or even more hours does not worry her in the least. As to the rest of the household furnishings; they are about the same as those of 4,000 B. C.

#### Religious Beliefs

The Babyra do not adore idols. They have a vague belief in a superior beneficent Being;

but they also believe in evil spirits, who are blamed for all misfortunes. To propitiate them, sacrifices are offered in little grass huts from ten to fifteen inches high. Amulets, such as animal hair, an odd-shaped piece of wood, or a string tied around the wrist or ankle serving as a charm, are worn for protection against the evil spirits.

#### Women Prefer Boys

When a child is born the mother rejoices and if her first born is a boy her joy knows no bounds. For three days the child must not be taken from the hut; on the fourth day a name, which is dictated by the circumstances surrounding its birth, is given to the baby, thus: "Simandugu," I have no brother; "Bascha," girl; "Manuyanga," thin; "Budzume," worry; "Bakanoba," they hate her, a name given to a daughter in a large family of girls when a boy was expected; or "Mundizadudu," he awaits the earth, because all the other children of the family have died.

For some days after the birth of a baby; the neighbors bring the mother wood, water and food. During the first few weeks the baby is carried in its mother's arms; but after that, the little black cherub is rolled in a piece of cloth or a piece of matting and slung on the mother's back; or, at times, it is held astride the mother's lap. The baby accompanies the mother to the field, where she cultivates; to church and even into the confessional. The women have no notion of hygiene and mothers care for their children in their own way; they dose the little ones with native medicine and if an abscess must be lanced, the rough native knife is used. Every morning the child is bathed and rubbed. As to its clothing, it does not need to be

washed for the simple reason that it has none. When the mother carries the baby on her back she covers it with a goat-skin to protect it from the sun. If she is going to dig, she lays her darling on the bare ground; but if the tiny rogue objects to its hard bed, she picks it up, slings it on her back again and proceeds with her work. The children grow up in the open air; the boys fish or tend the flock; the girls help their mothers care for the little brothers and sisters, chase away the birds from the crops and carry wood and water.

A girl never chooses her partner for life but marries the man of her father's choice who must pay the dowry agreed on for the girl. This may be paid with goats or oxen or with money. Long ago tools or cloth were accepted in payment. "Those were the good old days," the old folks say.

### Marriage and Death

Before her marriage a young girl becomes acquainted with her future parents-in-law; custom demands that she grow up under their eyes. Thus, they will know if she is a good worker; if not, she will not be accepted. The girl will have a happy life if she has a large family; if she is childless she is likely to be sent back to her home. Polygamy exists among the natives. When a woman loses her husband by death, she is robbed of all her belongings, even her clothes, and she is reduced to cover herself with the leaves of the banana tree. During six months she wears on her neck, in sign of mourning, a stone covered with red clay. The husband is buried with all his personal belongings, his pipe, his calabash and his clothes, so that his spirit may be satisfied and may not haunt the living.

### Family Conversions

The mission of Bunia is only one of 13 mission Stations in the Lake Albert vicariate. In this section of Belgian Congo there are already 164,000 Catholics and over 65,000 catechumens on the way to conversion. Each year the mission counts hundreds of new families who, leaving aside the superstitious customs of their ancestors, embrace the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Twice a year, large classes of catechumens, on passing their final examination, receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

*May the good examples of these neophytes lead their beathen brethren to seek peace and salvation in the One Fold.*

*It was arithmetic time. The pupils, all wonderful youngsters with the exception of Paulo, who counts on his toes, were very attentive. They were just beginning fractions. Sister had a large lemon, which she cut in four and explained that four equal parts made a whole, and every one agreed.*

*Then Sister told the children that she would cut each of the four parts in half and that would give eight equal parts which would also make a whole. But no one agreed.*

*Sister explained again, but further explanations only caused their little faces to become darker. Then all of a sudden they began to giggle.*

*"Well, what is the matter," asked Sister.*

*"Please, Sister," replied Paulo, "if you cut those parts in two, some of the juice will be lost. How then can they make a whole?"*



*Babies are carried this way on their Mother's back until well over two years of age.*

Behold the day which the Lord has made.  
Let us pass it in thanksgiving and jubilation!

AT THE BREAK OF DAY, the sun rises gloriously over the mission of Likuni. Crowds of people are wending their way from all directions toward the residence of the White Fathers where, on the veranda facing the lawn, a beautiful altar has been erected for the celebration of the open-air Pontifical Mass in thanksgiving for the Golden Jubilee of the Vicariate of Likuni, Nyasaland.

The long awaited day had at last arrived. Months of exciting preparation, untiring work, generous devotedness, careful organization had finally wound up to the grandiose feast which was to turn out a PERFECT DAY in the history of the Mission.

Each mission in the Vicariate had its part to play, its effort to give and fraternal cooperation always leads to success.

As a fitting prelude to such a great day, His Excellency, our most Reverend Bishop Fady ordered an immediate preparation consisting of a tridium of grateful prayer, solemn benediction, recitation of the rosary, hymns, etc., at the Mission churches; while in the distant villages the catechists assembled the Catholics and catechumens for rosary and hymns.

The last days were busier than ever with final preparations . . . decoration of the church, beautifying the surrounding buildings in every possible way, the erection of giant bamboo poles along the paths to which were attached multi-colored banners, waving in the breeze and lending an air of festive gaiety as well as creating an atmosphere of cordial welcome for the numerous guests already arrived from all parts.

There were delegations from the 14 missions of the Vicariate and from the Junior and Senior Seminaries. African priests, Brothers and Sisters also came from each Mission Post. And to enhance the solemnity and dignity of the feast, several Bishops gathered together for the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of our Vicariate and the arrival of the first White Fathers in Nyasaland.

Bishop Fady celebrated the Pontifical High Mass assisted by the White Fathers and two African Priests.

The Ordinary of the Mass was sung by the whole Congregation, while the Proper was rendered with exquisite perfection by the Senior Seminarians under the direction of a White Father. Sacred hymns, sung in parts were also rendered by the Likuni Normal School boys.

Clergy in procession left the church arriving at the open-air Altar on the veranda. A large

## A GOLDEN JUBILEE

crowd grouped in perfect order was assembled and waiting in silent expectation. There were also several European families of the neighboring districts, present.

During the Mass, Reverend Father Nixon, delivered an inspiring sermon in English. In a few well-chosen words, he recalled the history of the work accomplished in the past fifty years in the Vicariate, first under the Episcopate of His Excellency Bishop Guillemé of unforgettable memory. Having spent more than fifty years in Africa, he had arrived when Nyasaland was still part of the Bangweolo Vicariate. Bishop Guillemé founded the African Sisters of Maria Theresa Ludochowski and he started the great work of the Mission press. His Excellency organized the Vicariate of Nyasaland which, with God's blessing, developed rapidly. Are not the African Priests and Sisters, who work side by side with us in all our undertakings, a tangible proof of this reality? Bishop Guillemé was beloved by all, and his memory is still sacred to both Africans and Europeans. He was a great worker, of undaunted courage, a worthy successor to Bishop Dupont, the pioneer Bishop of this part of Africa and King of the Brigands.<sup>1</sup>

His Excellency, Bishop Julien succeeded

<sup>1</sup> If you care to know more about the life of this extraordinary Bishop, write to: The White Fathers of Africa, River Ridge, Franklin, Pa., to obtain the book of his life: KING OF THE BRIGANDS, price \$1.00.

*The Procession on its way*





## BILEE at LIKUNI

Bishop Guilleme and continued with great ardor and zeal the tremendous work begun by his predecessors. After many years of hard work, including the opening of several new mission stations, due to ill health, Bishop Julien retired.

Our new Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Fady arrived last Christmas and has already shouldered the heavy task assigned to him by Divine Providence. Father Nixon summarized his whole sermon by the words, "truly, the finger of God is here."

Then in their own language, an African priest, Father Mangani, briefly, but with heartfelt words, brought forth the mercies of the Lord over Nyasaland. He spoke of the grandeur of Christianity and the necessity of gathering therein as many souls as possible in order to continue the great work accomplished in the last fifty years.

During the Pontifical Mass, which was unusually solemn and pious, the most perfect order was maintained, each group having been assigned a place. The background of the Altar consisted of long banners in green and gold, each carrying in large letters the name of one of the 14 missions of the Vicariate and forming a sort of guard of honor around the statue of the Sacred Heart crowning the Altar. Set off by Palm trees and flowers, it looked very nice.

At the close of the High Mass, the guests were invited to visit an exhibit that had been

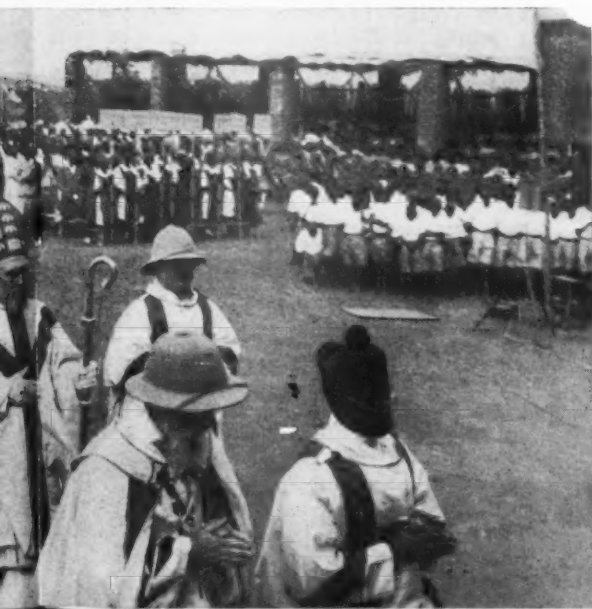
arranged for the occasion. A large map of the vicariate with the mission stations silhouetted against it, was very effective. There was also a charcoal drawing of the Leper Colony of Mua which was set in a frame covered with banana and bamboo leaves cut and pasted artistically in such a way as to resemble a mosaic. Hand crafts, the work of the students of Guilleme Industrial School, were displayed along with native handwork from Bembeke and Likuni. Books in the Native languages composed and printed by the White Fathers as well as other items of interest were also on display. However, what attracted the greatest attention was the small statues in polished earthenware representing the missionary and native personnel of the Vicariate . . . the Bishop, a White Father, Brother and Sister and an African Priest, Brother, Seminarian and Sister. These were all moulded by one of the African Sisters.

Dinner was served in the vast reception hall of the Boys' Normal School, artistically decorated by the students. The tables had been prepared by the Sisters who also supervised the waiting on table, which was done by the Likuni Girl Scouts . . . They did unusually well for a first time, and received the congratulations of all present. Our Girl Scouts were quite attractive and graceful in their bright blue uniforms and head bands.

At the table of honor were seated the Bishops and other distinguished guests, including the personal delegate of the Governor of Nyasaland, unable to attend himself. In the name of the Governor, he congratulated the White Fathers upon their achievements, and after recalling briefly many interesting events of the past years, he extended his best wishes for continued success in the name of the Governor of Nyasaland. Our most Reverend Bishop also related many amusing anecdotes of the past. The meal and the toasts being ended, there followed a spontaneous entertainment by some of the White Fathers, wherein all joined in the singing leaving everyone in an atmosphere of fraternal cordiality.

Already outside, the African Band, led by Dennis Tenthani, was calling everyone to the playground to witness the afternoon show. There were games and dances executed by the different schools; a pretty drill, to the rythm of the phonograph by the Guilleme Girl Scouts. Our little girls reproduced several of the English Country dances. The Junior seminarians went through a series of acrobatics which called forth much applause. The Bembeke girls did an African pantomime, which accompanied by rythmic chanting was very effective. Then came the people of Ntakataka dressed in the traditional costume for the African war-dance

*its way to the open-air altar*





A WAR DANCER

called NJAZO, which is still in vogue in the regions around the lake. The costumes are made of bushy animal skins decorated with countless beads. They also wear little bells around the ankles and long feathers encircling their heads. Their graceful dancing mingled with war-cries, though a bit savage, still remains very original, and even the natives never tire of watching it.

This great crowd of spectators enjoyed every minute of the entertainment, and before the band blared out its final musical selection, the District Commissioner spoke a few words of thanks and of congratulations to the hosts.

The most impressive moment of this great day was in the late afternoon. The sun had set and when darkness was coming on, we gathered together once more, at church this time, for the torch light procession in honor of our Blessed Lady without which, the day would not have been complete. The well-organized procession, which included the students of the Girls' and Boys' schools, as well as all the guests and many Christians of nearby villages, solemnly and piously wound its way, singing hymns to Our Lady, towards the wide path of the

Normal school grounds to end up on the large plaza facing the White Fathers' house. Everyone in the procession had a lighted torch in hand, which gave the illusion of being at Lourdes or at Fatima.

Finally, all were gathered in a large semi-circle in front of the White Fathers' residence where, before a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes the SALVE REGINA was intoned followed by the MAGNIFICAT. Then His Excellency read the consecration of the Vicariate to the Blessed Virgin. In spite of the crowd, a dead silence prevailed. One could feel that every one was recollected and impressed by this crown of Missionaries with their Christians at the feet of Our Lady.

The consecration ended, the Bishop rose to his feet and read to the assembly several of the numerous congratulatory telegrams and cablegrams received on the occasion of our Jubilee. The first and most precious was from Our Holy Father, granting His blessing to our Vicariate.

Finally the procession turned towards the church for Solemn Benediction, which was to close this unforgettable day by the blessing of Jesus upon the Vicariate present in those who were crowding in the church.

The Golden Jubilee of our Vicariate is now a thing of the past, as for the date, but it marks the starting point toward more numerous conversions, greater fervor, more ardent zeal. May the Blessed Virgin obtain for us many vocations to help bring into the Fold of her Divine Son, the numerous pagans who still inhabit the Vicariate.

Sr. M. Irena, W. S.

## OBITUARY

We recommend to the prayers of our Readers the souls of:

Mr. Charles Norris, Jersey City, N. J., Guild Member.

Mrs. Ellen Sheehan, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Daniel Horan, Hawthorne, N. J.

Mrs. Josephine Chretien, Franklin, N. H.

Mr. Joseph Alexander, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Hugh Mullaney, Guild Member, Jersey City, N. J.

Mrs. Ellen Stanton, Guild Member, Jersey City, N. J.

John J. Wallace, Jersey City.

Mrs. Mary Hill, Millbury, Mass.

Miss Hannah Donovan, Millbury, Mass.

Mr. Edward Keller, Elizabeth, N. J.

# The Batoro Way of Telling Time

**I**N THE TORO PROVINCE OF UGANDA, in Central Africa, the people are known as the Batoro. They are rather handy at shaping iron into spades and spear heads; but they would be at a loss if asked to make the "innards" of a modern watch. In fact, the local "smithie" would have nothing to do with a watch and would not even be the least interested in an old-fashioned hour-glass.

## Time Not Precious

They have, however, a sort of sun-dial: a nut shell on the end of a straw stuck into the ground. This helps them to reckon the amount of time it will take the priest to read his office or hear confessions. While he is doing this, they know he will not be around to check on their work. Clever rascals!

The natives, like us, realize that the day has its sad hours and its happy ones, that there is a time for eating and a time for sleeping, that there are hours of work and hours of dancing. But time is not precious as with us. It is not a treasure to be hoarded; for there is always plenty of time to spare. So we cannot expect the Batoro to measure time as carefully as we do.

With them the day is divided into irregular and rather elastic periods of time. Each period has a name which recalls the usual occupations of the people throughout the day; and since cattle is the main livelihood of the people, it is no wonder that the cow is mentioned so often in telling the time of day.

## Morning Time

"Time opens its mouth" is a rather unpoetical name for dawn, at six o'clock. (At the equator the sun always rises at 6 A. M. and sets at 6 P. M.) But, as the sun comes up, the village is wide-awake and many domestic duties must be taken care of. Between six and seven o'clock there are many divisions of time:

"It is light and time to get up."

"The cows are being milked."

"The sun is out."

"It is daytime."

"The cows are still in the yard."

## Litanies of Time

During the forenoon the divisions are longer for the native is tired. As a result eight o'clock

is "the cows leave for pasture"; while from nine until midday "the cows are in the bush."

At noon the sun beats down without mercy on the thatched roof of a man's hut, on the rocks in the bush, on the hard earth of the much travelled trails. All the region seems afire under the sizzling heat of the bright globe glaring in the sky like a welder's arc. The people say, "The Sun is directly overhead," and this is literally true. If the sun's rays were darts, at noon they would enter a man through the top of his head and come out through his heels.

As the heat gradually eases off, activities start once again.

"The menfolk draw water."

"The cows are drinking."

"The cows have drunk."

"The cows are still hungry and looking for food."

This takes us to three o'clock in the afternoon when life slows up until sunset at six o'clock: "the sun sinks." Then comes a busy period:

"Night has come."

"People are around the kettle."

"Sleeping mats are made ready."

"The stones of the fire-place are cold."

"The master of the house has retired" (about 8:30).

"All sleep."

"All sleep soundly" (about 9:30).

From 10 P. M. to 2 A. M. is the time of sleep. So the white man's midnight, as far as the Batoro are concerned, can be anytime during this period.

As a result of this means of telling time, here is the way the Sunday announcements read:

"Time opens its mouth": the church doors will be opened.

"The cows are being milked": confessions will be heard.

"The sun is out": low Mass.

"The cows leave for pasture": High Mass.

After High Mass, catechism class until "The sun is directly overhead."

"The cows are still hungry and looking for food": Benediction.

# A SUNDAY AT RWAZA

RWAZA, center of an important mission, is part of Moulera, Rwanda. The inhabitants are called "Balera," a tumultuous, loud, active, war mongering race, who have all our sympathies.

A Sunday morning at Rwaza is something worth filming! At sunrise the natives come down from the hills. The first Mass is at 5:30. One must be on time. Men, women and children hurry along as if to win a prize. As they pass below our chapel windows, the rings they wear on their ankles and their bracelets make so much noise one would think a regiment was passing by. On Sundays we cannot meditate in quiet, as you shall see.

When the first bell rings the natives all hurry



*The rings they wear on their ankles make a great deal of noise.*

even more so. It is also time for us to go to church but we are careful to keep out of the way of the scurrying crowd.

Here and there one sees women exchanging greetings, depending on the length of time they have been without seeing each other or on the degree of their friendship. They embrace each other with one or two arms and tap each other on the back. The men not only greet each other as is the custom, but they also exchange pipes.

Ten minutes before Mass the church is full. Morning prayers are said in common; done in an orderly manner if a missionary keeps the cadence, but if not, the natives seem to race to see who shall finish first.

During Holy Mass the prayers are interrupted only by singing — always together. It is like a big family at the Eucharistic Banquet. The last benediction is followed by a catechism class under the direction of the Father Superior.

It is 7:30. The natives all leave the church and as soon as they are past the gates the race begins again as the High Mass is about to start. There are collisions, toes stepped on, clothing torn, and children fall. Accidents or not, the race continues. No one lingers after the service except those who have a message to give.

We ourselves try to find a path so that our white habit will not be damaged too much.

We try to place everyone before the priest arrives. The priest is devoted to his sermon. His words are vibrant, warm; not as warm, however, as the sun that beats down on those natives who are still outside. They should be inside but if someone should try to close the doors they would rush inside, room or not.

The Josephites, native brothers and some of their students form the choir and from their hearts come the notes of the Gloria, Credo, and Sanctus. The loud voices of the natives pierce the heavens to glorify God.

Some of the babies cry on their mothers' backs, others play hide and seek behind the pillars, while others walk on all fours. But if God is content, why shouldn't we be?

High Mass is followed by Holy Communion, blessing of rosaries and medals, and Baptism of small babies (15 or 20 each Sunday). Then everyone runs along again to the forest, the men with their lances or canes, the women with their babies. The babies jump up and down but the Mamas continue on their way.

*(Continued on Page 13)*

# The Byways of God

A wrong path leads to the right place

Reverend A. F. Roy, W. F.

EARLY ONE MORNING I set off on a long trek with Tadeo, chatting gaily of one thing and another. My native cook was good company. But alas, when the conversation becomes too interesting one is apt to follow the wrong trail in a maze of paths and not be aware of it. This happened twice, and instead of reaching Mfungo village in three hours we took four and a half to make the journey.

At last we arrived. I heard confessions, spoke of death, heaven and hell, of the happiness of the baptized, talked of other matters and then we resumed our walk to the next village.

A few natives accompanied us as far as the creek where somebody's white-bearded grandpa furnished us with precise directions.

"Here's the road. Soon you will come to a field enclosed by a stockade. Take the path beside it, travelling always to the right. You cannot go wrong, as the road to Chisanga-Ponde is the only wide one."

That was clear. I thanked him with a "God bless you," and the cook and I started out on the path after crossing the creek. We did reach the stockade. Tadeo stopped, looking around him.

"Well," I said, "why hesitate? Didn't the old man say to take this path?"

"Father, this other one is the right trail. Jeremiah was wrong. Come, let us follow this road."

"Wait a minute," I drawled out, knocking the ashes from my pipe. "He said to turn to the right. Can't you see that your road goes north, and Chisanga-Ponde where we are headed for is east. Anyhow, your trail is covered with grass; nobody goes there."

"Father," insisted Tadeo, "I assure you this is the right road."

I argued, he argued, we both argued. Finally in spite of my common sense, I yielded.

"Very well, young man, but if you are wrong you will have to cook a double portion of those lima beans this evening."

"Father, I assure you that . . ."

To cut short his palavar I began to say my Rosary. Scarcely had I started the second decade when we came to the edge of a field planted with corn.

"You see, Tadeo, we are lost. We are walk-

*During catechism class a Missionary Father spoke about hell to the children. That same evening he received two books illustrating Catholic beliefs from a friend at home. The next morning he was happy to take the books to show them to the children. The illustrations were nice and touching, but as he was turning the pages he came to a most terrifying picture of hell. All breaths were suspended in terror and silence reigned for awhile. But as the contemplation went on, one little girl could not contain the impression the picture gave her and burst out laughing.*

*On inquiring what made her laugh, she exclaimed, "Is it not amusing and interesting, Father? Why did you tell us about hell, since only the white people go there. You see, there are no blacks in hell."*

ing in circles and these are simply the gardens of Mfungo."

"You were right, Bambo, and I'm sorry. However, we must keep on now till we meet someone who will show us the way back to our road."

Some thirty Hail Marys further we came upon a dilapidated hut which showed signs of neglect, or misery, or both. Seated in the opening that serves as a doorway was a man of about fifty with a skeleton appearance. He greeted us with a racking cough; anyone could see that he was seriously ill.

"Good day, grandfather," I said, trying to sound cheerful. "Are you feeling well?"

"No, great chief, I am very sick."

"For a long time?"

"Since the last harvest of millet when someone bewitched me."

"Are you alone?" Glancing around I could see no one and hear no sound.

"My son is working in the garden," came the feeble response after a violent cough.

I sent Tadeo after him, then seated myself by the dying man's side. I told him of God, the Fall of man, of Christ and the Redemption. The poor fellow shook with fever in the afternoon sun but he listened attentively. As I





*One of many dilapidated huts*

slowly and very simply disclosed to him the Mysteries of our holy Faith his eyes seemed to open to the eternal truths. Soon the instruction ended. He humbly accepted all and when I proposed baptism, he whispered: "Yes, Father, may I soon rest in that place where I shall never again suffer these miseries and where I will truly be a child of God."

#### **Tadeo's Explanation!**

I besought him to repent of all his misgivings, and sprinkling holy water upon his forehead, pronounced the words: "Peter, I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

I wished to talk longer with my neophyte, but the sun was already low. We had to depart.

"Well, Tadeo," I asked my cook, "what are you thinking of?"

"Really, I am wondering how it is I lost my way after Jeremiah directed me so carefully . . . Do you know, Father, I am certain that God wished to save this man's soul. It could be that for a moment I was allowed to stray from the right path, as though I had lost my reason."

"You are quite right, young man," I replied, reaching for my pipe. "But I do hope that the good Lord has given you back your sense of direction for the rest of the journey."

And so we went on in the gathering darkness, through a tortuous and narrow path. Briars, thorns and dead branches tore at us from all sides. What did it matter? From this very byway which they covered I had plucked a flower to bloom in Heaven.

## **A Sunday at Rwaza**

(Concluded)

Those who pass us greet us with "Yambo, Babikira, Muraho, Mwaraye" — "Good day, Sisters, how are you?" We answer, "Are you going to a fire?" "Are you going to war?" They laugh and say, "Do you think we could walk as slowly as you do? One would think us sick."

Gay and content with their lot, our brave Balera continue on their way, always eager to conquer all obstacles for the pleasure of winning.

Ten o'clock low Mass for those who are more distant from the church, or who were obliged to stay home earlier.

Among the trees that surround the Fathers' house are groups of catechists, of chiefs and of professors who come to settle difficulties.

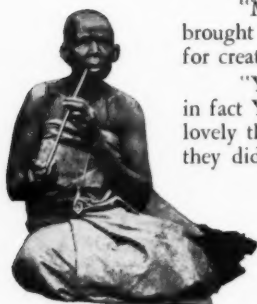
Sunday morning has gone. Afternoon is a bit more calm. At 2 o'clock rosary and Benediction reunites those who live close to the church.

The Lord's day is ended. All have prayed to God in His temple, all have taken courage and fortitude for the week to come.

The Baleras are always hurrying from here to there, but thanks to your prayers, they shall arrive some day at eternal happiness in their real home.

Sister Marie Veronica, W. S.

# OLD TERESIA'S PRAYER



"MY GOD," says Teresia, "You are in Heaven. You, our Father, who brought me, old Teresia, to life. Yes, I am sincerely grateful to you, my Father, for creating me. Amen, my God!

"Yes, You thought You were doing a good job in creating Adam and Eve: in fact You did do a good job. You put them in a beautiful garden. It was so lovely there! They had everything they wanted to eat, and behold those idiots, they didn't think they had enough, so they ate some fruit, the only forbidden fruit! So You chased them out at once. Oh, they richly deserved it, for being so greedy. My God, amen, my God.

"No, Adam, you must surely have been a fool to have done such a thing; to offend our good God by greed. No, it's too stupid; I should understand it if you had nothing else to eat, but you had so much!

"Ah well, you paid a heavy price for your greed. Yes, luckily Almighty God took pity on us and sent us Our Lord to redeem us. My God, amen, my God.

"Yes, Lord, You came to save us. You came to suffer and to die on a cross for me, old Teresia. I am grateful to You for this. My Father, amen, my Father.

"O Blessed Virgin, the Sister told me that it was you who gave us Our Lord, that is why I salute you and love you very much. My Father, amen."

\* \* \* \* \*

This soliloquy goes on for a good quarter of an hour. Then old Teresia makes the sign of the Cross. "In the name of the Father — yes, my hand goes up to my forehead, then to my breast and I must say: and of the Son."

Then she stops . . .

"Jangu! My God! whoever comes after the Son? Now I've forgotten who the third one is, in spite of the fact that the Sister told me again yesterday."

She starts again:

"In the name of the Father and of the Son, but really I don't remember the third one. You see, my God, I've forgotten it. Anyway: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Blessed Virgin who gave us the Son. Amen, my God."

And to end up with: "The Fathers and Sisters taught me that. O thank You. My God. Thank You."

Then Teresia lights her pipe.

---

## Novitiate NEWS

*On the feast of Christ the King the usual ceremony of Investiture and Profession took place. After Mass, which was celebrated by His Excellency, Bishop Zuroweste, two happy postulants in bridal attire went up to the altar, where the Bishop was seated, to receive from His Excellency the habit of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. Withdrawing to change their bridal gowns for the Livery of Christ, they*

*were pleased on returning to receive their names in religion.*

*Rita Levesque from Lewiston, Maine, became Sister Mary Florence and Elizabeth Simmons from Ottawa, Kansas, became Sister Mary Esperanza.*

*In the meantime, the long awaited moment arrived for Sister Maria de la Solidad, the former Maria Angelique Lopez from Porto Rico, to take her first vows, making her a full fledged White Sister and entitling her to leave for Africa.*

## *Will They Be* GOD'S *or the* REDS'?

*But you will say, "Africa is not under the yoke of the Reds, these innocent ones will not be Stalin's!"*

Don't be too sure, that depends on you.

"Eyes, Communist eyes, are on Africa," announced the Most Reverend Fulton J. Sheen, "according to reports from London, it is the present intention of the Communists to concentrate their attacks on Africa."

Over 1700 White Sisters are dedicating their lives for the salvation of Africa, caring for the sick, mothering orphans and abandoned children, educating the youth and Christianizing the masses.

With the help of your prayers, sufferings, sacrifices and Christmas offerings, they will bring CHRIST to the old and young, fill their hungry hearts so full of love for HIM that when the teaching of hate is presented to them, there will be no room for it.

Through this appeal, our Blessed Mother knocks at your door begging you shelter for her little King; so that, she may lay Him in the Manger of African hearts before the Communists can cry out to her, "There is no room in the inn."



Whose then will they be . . .  
God's or the Reds'?

*An offering will be most grate-  
fully received at:*

White Sisters' Convent  
Metuchen, N. J.

*You will then share the prayers  
and the merit of the apostolic  
labors of over 1700  
White Sisters.*

